



STATE SENATOR
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INFO & NEWS

from the

Indiana Senate

Avian Flu and Pandemic Flu: What You Need to Know

Avian Influenza, or “Bird Flu” has been a hot topic in the news over the last year or so. Avian Flu is a disease of birds that can occasionally affect people. Avian flu is NOT the same thing as a human influenza pandemic, and any report of avian flu in the U.S. or elsewhere in North America would NOT signal the start of a human flu pandemic.

While it is possible that humans could contract a form of avian flu through close contact with a bird, a human pandemic would be the result of a new strain of flu that can be efficiently transmitted human to human. Experts say a form of avian flu could potentially mutate into a strain that can be transmitted human to human, but there is currently NO evidence of any such mutation involving the strain that has been reported recently in Asia, Africa and Europe.

U.S. commercial poultry is produced and inspected at the highest standards in the world and avian flu does NOT present a significant risk to the safety of the domestic poultry and egg supply. Pro-active steps are being taken to monitor

the risk of avian flu in the U.S. Surveillance of wild and domestic birds is underway nationally, including in Indiana.

My primary concerns are the critical challenges facing law enforcement in communities, court systems and health agency needs, while at the same time balancing the constitutional and due process of the citizens who might be subject to a quarantine order.

This spring, I attended the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) symposium titled “Justice and Public Health Systems Planning: Confronting a Pandemic Outbreak” in Chicago where I participated in a panel discussion on the national strategy for pandemic influenza.

At the symposium, I received a copy of the plan for the coordination of the multi-level response between federal, state and local governments in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak. BJA issued a report detailing the discussions and highlighting promising planning and operational protocols and processes that local justice system agencies currently have in place to plan for and

Clinical Signs of Bird Flu:

Poultry owners who see any of the following signs in their birds should call 1-866-536-7593 for guidance:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Incoordination
- Diarrhea

respond to a pandemic or other public health crisis. Additionally, Indiana state agencies are working hard to develop “Continuity of Operations” and “Continuity of Government” plans to ensure that essential services will still be provided during a pandemic.



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STEELE**

Serving District 44 in Jackson, Lawrence,
Monroe, Orange & Washington Counties



Sen. Steele (bottom left) attended the official bill signing for Senate Enrolled Act 5, which protects the sanctity of funerals, both military and civilian. Steele was the bill's primary author. It is now a state law.

Did You Know...?

... that the average property tax bill went down this year?

... that on June 30, 2006, the state officially overcame a \$600 million deficit and closed its books for the fiscal year with a balanced budget for the first time in a decade?

Job Creation Legislation Proves Successful

— More jobs for Hoosiers are on the way —

Although the last two legislative sessions have been filled with substantial changes to the way Indiana does business, a priority in the Senate has been job creation. Although government actions cannot create jobs overnight, Indiana is beginning to see results just one year after the major economic development laws of 2005 were implemented.

In 2005, the General Assembly sped up and streamlined the creation of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), created tax breaks for research and development, passed a shovel-ready site development plan and expanded existing tax credits. The result: 85,000 more Hoosiers are working than in January 2005 and unemployment is at a low 4.9 percent.

More jobs are on the way. Recent job announcements include:

- **Honda announcing a \$550 million plant that will employ 2,000 people in Greensburg (the plant will have capacity for 4,000 employees)**

- **American Commercial Lines agreeing to create 1,100 jobs in Jeffersonville**

- **Federal Express announcing a \$200 million expansion creating 800 new jobs in Indianapolis**

- **Rolls Royce committing to bring 600 aerospace jobs to Indianapolis**

- **Pfizer deciding to create 450 jobs in Terre Haute**

- **American General Financial Services expanding its corporate headquarters to create 150 new jobs in Evansville**

- **Arbonne International opening a 400-employee distribution center in Greenwood.**

- **Nestle selecting Anderson for a 300-job facility**

- **Sallie Mae announcing 700 new jobs in Muncie**

Many other announcements have occurred in the past 18 months, many more are expected in the future, and I am committed to continuing to create a job-friendly environment here in Indiana.

MAJOR MOVES MEANS MAJOR MONEY

Southern Indiana to benefit from lease of Toll Road

On June 28, Indiana closed a lease with Statewide Mobility Partners, which will operate the Indiana Toll Road in exchange for **\$3.8 billion**. That money has been deposited and is currently earning interest at a rate of about **\$500,000 every day**. For an up-to-the-second look at how much interest has been accrued, visit www.in.gov/tos/MajorMoves.htm

All of this money will go toward improving infrastructure in the state of Indiana, and District 44 will see millions of dollars in road improvements in the coming years. In addition to the local projects planned by the Indiana Department of Transportation, the legislature also approved \$150 million in payments to local governments to be used as they see fit.

Here is a breakdown of what the counties in District 44 will receive over just two years:

- **Jackson County — \$1,344,300**
- **Lawrence — \$1,249,400**
- **Monroe — \$2,272,200**
- **Orange — \$888,800**
- **Washington — \$1,112,200**

As you can see, Major Moves will generate a significant amount of money for our area that will improve the quality of life. I look forward to seeing a lot more orange construction barrels on the streets I represent in the coming years.



Cracking Down on Voter Fraud

Voter ID Law to Affect November Election

This November, Hoosiers will have the opportunity to exercise one of their most precious freedoms available—the vote.

It is the Legislature's responsibility to adopt policies that protect our representative democracy by ensuring each vote cast is valid and legal. The General Assembly did just that during the 2005 Legislative Session, passing a law that mandates that all voters must now present a photo ID in order to cast a vote.

Years ago, poll workers knew the people in their precinct and had no reason to question someone's identity. Now, it is increasingly common for Election Day volunteers to live in another town or city than the one in which they are serving. The voter ID law gives poll workers a tool to verify a person's identity.



The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has agreed to grant photo IDs free of charge to those who cannot pay the \$9 fee. In order to better accommodate Indiana voters, BMV branches will be open the day before the election and will remain open late on Election Day. Residents of state-licensed nursing homes are exempt from showing identification if the polling place is located inside the facility in which they live. The bill also protects the rights of those who have a religious objection to being photographed.

Voters who show up at the polls without identification will be able to fill out a provisional ballot. They then will be required to visit the county clerk or election board's office and show an ID or object on religious grounds.

Photo IDs are required for many commonplace circumstances that Americans face every day, like renting a video or obtaining a library card. It only makes sense that a photo ID be required for something as important as voting.



Sen. Steele is pictured with American Legion Department Commander Ron Martin. The American Legion presented Steele with its Distinguished Public Service Award for 2006 in recognition of his hard work and support for veterans' issues.

Defending the Right to Bear Arms

New laws protect rights of law-abiding citizens

"The people shall have a right to bear arms, for the defense of themselves and the State."

Article 1, Section 32 of the Indiana Constitution grants us the freedom to own firearms and store them in our homes. I have always been a firm supporter of our 2nd Amendment rights and would like to tell you about two new laws that protect law-abiding gun owners.

The General Assembly passed legislation this year to simplify the handgun licensing process. Previously, everyone with a handgun license was required to have their permit updated and be fingerprinted every four years — even people who have had such a license all of their adult life. There aren't too many unchanging things in our lives, but one of those is our fingerprints. The state finally acknowledged that licensed gun owners are law abiding citizens who should not be forced through this arbitrary and cumbersome process every four years.

The Indiana State Police issues about 80,000 gun permits per year; this measure will reduce that number and make the process much more efficient. Safety is still a top priority and law en-

forcement officers will continue to revoke licenses as necessary.

These small, sensible changes are a great improvement of the current system and make the licensing procedure much more efficient.

In addition, the Legislature added to statute something that is already widely accepted as case law. The "Stand Your Ground" law does basically three things to protect those who are protecting themselves.

It establishes the presumption that a criminal who forcibly enters or intrudes into your home or occupied vehicle is there to cause death or great bodily harm; therefore a person may use any manner of force, including deadly force, against that person.

It removes the "duty to retreat" if you are attacked in any place you have a right to be. You no longer have to turn your back on a criminal

and try to run when attacked. Instead, you may stand your ground and fight back, meeting force with force, including deadly force, if you reasonably believe it is necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm to yourself or others.

It provides that persons using force authorized by law shall not be prosecuted for using such force. It also prohibits criminals and their families from suing victims for injuring or killing the criminals who have attacked them. In short, it gives rights back to law-abiding people.

We felt it necessary to add these statutes to make the law in such situations perfectly clear—Hoosiers have the right to defend themselves and their families.

I am pleased we were able to accomplish these things in defense of our Constitution and for Hoosier gun owners.

"THE PEOPLE SHALL HAVE A RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS, FOR THE DEFENSE OF THEMSELVES AND THE STATE."

— Article 1, Section 32 of the Indiana Constitution

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